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“If I forget thee, O Jerusalem! let my right hand forget its cunning.”—Ps. 137, v. 5.

Past Feeling.

Two thoughts based on plain statements of the word of God, are full of comfort in reference to sinful and fallen man. There is no amount of guilt which the blood of Christ cannot wash away, and there is no state of darkness and hardness of heart beyond the converting power of the grace of God. Salvation “to the uttermost” is open and free to the “chief” of sinners. Yet while this is true, and thousands who know it to be so are rejoicing in the fact, the painful contrast sometimes occurs of a soul grown utterly and finally indifferent to the mercy of God. Such a case is presented in the following narrative, which conveys a solemn warning:

“Please, sir, George Lewis is dangerously ill. His friends have sent to ask you to see him as soon as possible.”

This is the first intimation I had received of the illness of one, who but a few weeks before had seemed to bid fair to live twenty years or more.

In a few minutes I stood near the dying man. His strong constitution and robust appearance had yielded marvellously soon to the ravages of disease. The shadow of his lately fine and manly form lay in a condition of infant helplessness upon his deathbed.

As long as I had known him, George Lewis was a comparatively regular attendant at the Lord’s day services, and sometimes was seen at our weekly meetings for prayer. There was no reason to think that his indifference to spiritual religion was greater than it is (alas that it should be so!) in the case of most who are “hearers only” of the gospel.

What he *seemed* to be, may be gathered from the following observations. His acquaintance with the Scriptures was much above the average. He always spoke with reverence of the truths of the gospel. He gave liberally towards the spread of religion at home and abroad. His disposition was reserved, and this natural reserve had possibly been increased because, as an unmarried man, he had spent much of his life in solitude. His temper was decidedly good, and impressed others in his favour. No friend or even acquaintance would have thought it a burden to render George Lewis considerable help if he would but accept it.

These observations are necessary, in order that the reader may understand the man as he appears in the following conversation which I held with him.

“I am surprised,” I observed, “to see you so ill. What ails you?”

“A fatal disease, sir.”

“I hope not, as you say, *fatal*.”

“There is no doubt about it sir,” he replied. “The doctor has only just left. Before he did so, he frankly told me I must make what preparations were necessary, as I could not live more than forty-eight hours.”

“What is your disease?”

“I don’t know. Doctor B—— will not tell me what he thinks was the first cause of my illness; but mortification has now set in, and there is no remedy.”

“My dear brother,” I exclaimed, “this is very painful information. Are you prepared for the great change?”

“As much prepared as I shall ever be.” was his reply.